

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

November 27, 2006

Mr. Richard J. Dahl
Chief Operating Officer
Dole Food Company, Inc.
One Dole Drive
Westlake Village, CA 91362

Dear Mr. Dahl:

As you know, the U.S. Congress is expected to vote soon on an extension of the trade preferences provided by the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA), due to expire on December 31, 2006. Outside of petroleum, one of the primary beneficiaries of the ATPA program is the Andean cut flower export industry, where Dole is the largest exporter.

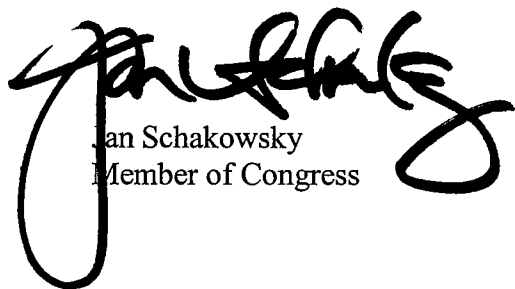
As you may also know, the benefits provided by ATPA are by law conditioned on beneficiary countries making progress on worker rights. We are writing you today to express strong concern about continuing reports that workers in the Colombian flower industry are denied their basic rights. In particular, we are disturbed about reports that workers in the sector are unable to organize independent unions, unions that are not backed by the industry. According to a number of NGOs, including the ILRF, US/LEAP, ENS, and Corporacion Cactus, efforts by workers to form independent unions in the Colombian flower sector are consistently blocked by employers who frequently bring in management-favored unions to thwart workers who seek to exercise their basic rights.

We are particularly distressed to learn that on October 12, 2006 Dole announced that it would close down its largest plantation in Colombia, a plantation that has more union members than any other Dole plantation in Colombia but where the company has fought for two years to undermine the independent union. Dole has cited the plantation's lack of productivity as its rationale for closing but as of yet has not provided any supporting documentation. The Colombian trade union movement has denounced the planned closing as an anti-union reprisal and called on Dole to reverse its decision.


The issue of worker rights and trade, particularly in the Andean region, will receive renewed attention in the new Congress. Congressional consideration of the Administration's request to extend ATPA will pose an early opportunity to examine the degree to which worker rights are respected in the region, and in the Colombian flower industry in particular.

We hope that Dole will quickly take the steps necessary to persuade us and others that Dole will respect core labor rights in its flower operations in Colombia but the shutting of a plantation in the middle of a labor conflict calls into serious question Dole's commitment to worker rights. It also calls into question whether the flower industry merits an extension of ATPA.

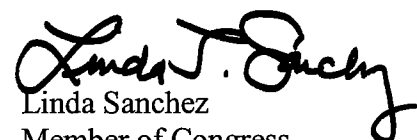
Sincerely,



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Linda Sanchez
Member of Congress